



Antelope Valley Air Quality Management District
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MEDIA RELEASE

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HUGHES AWARDED AIR DISTRICT'S TOP AWARD

AV Auto Paints Manager Recognized for Compliance Outreach to Local Body Shops

Lancaster –AV Auto Paints and Supply's Marla Hughes was recognized today by the Governing Board of the Antelope Valley Air Quality Management District, as the Sales Manager for the small, family-run Lancaster auto body paint supplier was awarded the local regulatory agency's 2011/2012 Wm. "Pete" Knight Memorial AIRE (Achievement in Reducing Emissions) Award for helping local auto body shop owners reduce emissions by educating them about lower-emitting alternatives and guiding them through the compliance process.

The AIRE award – which is presented annually to a local entity or individual who has demonstrated an exceptional commitment to protecting air quality within the AVAQMD's boundaries, which encompass the cities of Lancaster and Palmdale – was presented during the agency's monthly Governing Board meeting in Lancaster. The award was presented to Hughes by AVAQMD Governing Board Chair and City of Lancaster Councilmember Marvin Crist, AVAQMD Executive Director Eldon Heaston and Operations Manager Bret Banks.

Hughes received the AVAQMD's highest honor in recognition of her outreach efforts to local automotive body repair shops regarding the latest air quality regulations and emerging lower emitting paints

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and solvents for use at their facilities. As a 23-year employee of AV Auto Paints and Supply, Hughes has made it her mission to insure customers save time and money by investing in products which keep them in compliance with emerging air quality regulations, while continuing to provide the highest quality paint jobs possible. Since paints and solvents used in automotive refinishing contain Volatile Organic Compounds - a precursor of ozone, the main component of photochemical smog – recent air quality regulations have targeted the VOC content of paints used in the industry for emission reductions. Years before current regulations mandated lower emission limits, Hughes encouraged customers to make the switch to lower VOC products. As a result, AV Auto Paints' customers have been able to transition smoothly to the new limits, without the delays or interruptions which often plague suppliers when emission limit changes are implemented.

AV Auto Paints was also among the first local suppliers to proactively remove products containing hazardous air pollutants from their inventory and replace them with safer, HAP-free products. This resulted in Hughes' customers not having to spend money on additional equipment or product to comply with pending regulatory changes.

Hughes has also become a well-known spokesperson and liaison between local body shop owner/operators and the AVAQMD. During the District's rule development process – particularly during recent amendments to Rule 1151, which implemented the lower VOC limits – Hughes served as an advocate for local body shops, providing comments and suggested changes to the regulation which helped minimize the rule's impacts on local businesses.

According to AVAQMD Operations Manager Bret Banks, "Marla is the "go to" person for product data/information and regulatory compliance for most auto body repair shops in the Antelope Valley. Her commitment to serving her customers while reducing emissions is a great help to District staff and consistently helps Antelope Valley residents breathe easier."

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The Wm. “Pete” Knight Memorial AIRE Award is presented each year in conjunction with National Pollution Prevention Week, which is observed the third week of September. In 2005, the AVAQMD’s Governing Board renamed the District’s highest honor after the late Senator Wm. “Pete” Knight, in recognition of his pivotal role in the creation of the AVAQMD as a separate, locally governed air agency.

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